

hunting with them all came back in one piece. The story goes that Senator SCHUMER even shot a bird or two.

A lot of us have some trouble accepting that, but that is what BEN says and I will take him at his word. He has bagged all kinds of game birds—dove, quail, pheasants, turkey—but he has also had the opportunity to hunt all over the world and has bagged some of the most exotic game that is possible for a hunter to hunt. He is the epitome of a sportsman.

BEN isn't just a great hunter, though. He is also an accomplished practical joker and a wonderful singer. That may surprise some people. In our caucus, I proved to everyone that he could sing, and sing quite well. He recorded a few years ago a song called "Western Town" to raise money for visually impaired children. He was one of a dozen Nebraskan celebrities to record songs for this charity. I obtained a copy of this and played it at a Democratic caucus a few years ago. It was a hit. He was singing—it is his voice—and it was very good. Here is how it goes:

I'm from a western town in Nebraska. Don't know why I left so long ago. All I know is this western town in Nebraska lives in my heart and in my soul.

He did a great job of that song, as he has done everything since I have known him.

I am sure BEN is looking forward to going home to the western town—Omaha—where he lives with his wife Diane. She is wonderful. She was a great first lady and a wonderful Senator's spouse. I like her for lots of reasons, the smile she has, but also she makes some of the best chocolate chip cookies I have ever eaten. They have four children and five grandchildren. As he departs for Omaha, he will be sorely missed here in the Senate.

He has always been a loyal and dedicated member of this caucus, even when he was showing loyalty by questioning the wisdom of the party sometimes. He is arguably the most conservative member of the caucus. And while there are a few things BEN and I disagree on, we agree on most everything. Through the last 12 years he has been a valued member of the team. He has made many of our accomplishments possible through his dedication to country first and State second. That is how it should be.

Edwin Chapin, a North American preacher and poet, said:

No more duty can be urged upon those who are entering the great theater of life than simple loyalty to their best convictions.

BEN NELSON lives by his convictions, even though it may put him at odds with his party or his constituents. His highest duty is to country and his conscience.

We had a retirement party a week ago tomorrow, and when it was over, I grabbed BEN and we embraced. I care a great deal about him. He has made some extremely difficult votes, but he did it because it was the right thing to do. His duty is to country and his con-

science, and I repeat, I have such high respect for BEN NELSON. I will miss him. I have enjoyed working with him.

I congratulate BEN NELSON on his career in public service, including his service in the Senate, and wish him the very best in his retirement.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate shall be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the unanimous consent order, the vote that had been scheduled will be delayed until tomorrow.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RUBIO. We are in morning business; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

#### TRIBUTE TO JENNI RIVERA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, before I begin today, I know there are millions of people around the world and in this country who are mourning the loss of a singer by the name of Jenni Rivera, who was a huge star, particularly in Latin America but also in the United States. She died yesterday evening in a plane crash in northern Mexico.

Jenni was a real American success story. She was born in California to immigrants from Mexico. She started working at her father's small record label in Long Beach, CA, and she recorded from there. She made a number of top hits that made all the charts around the world. She was recently in Florida to receive a Billboard Music Award and performed at the Billboard Music Awards. We saw that on TV. My mom was a huge fan of hers—and also kind of the equivalent of "The Voice" in Mexico on the Telemundo network. She passed away last night.

Her calling card was she was a singer in a genre of music that is largely dominated by males. Yet she brought a powerful voice to that genre where she sang frankly about her struggles to give her children a better life in this country. Her death at a young age is a real tragedy. I know there are millions

of people across the country and around the world mourning her loss today. She is survived by her five children and two grandchildren.

Our prayers go out for her that God may grant her family the peace to deal with this difficult circumstance.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I come here on December 10, Human Rights Day. I want to briefly discuss human rights because, I would just say, while we have made great advances around the world in the cause of human rights, there are still a lot of roads to travel. Today is a good opportunity to take note of some of the struggles and challenges around the world with regard to human rights.

The first issue I want to talk about with regard to human rights is modern-day slavery. When people think about slavery they think about the historic nature of slavery in this country or around the world. It is hard to imagine that today, in the 21st century, that there are slaves in the world. It is even harder to believe there are slaves in the United States, but the fact is there are. It has been well documented that human trafficking around the world numbers in the millions.

Of course, sex trafficking is a big part of that, a grotesque part of that, and we are all aware that it is a very serious problem. So too is forced labor-type slavery, which we find around the world and even in the United States. In fact, there is no major city in the United States that does not have an element of human trafficking and human slavery within its confines. I think it is important to understand that exists, it is real, and it is happening.

To that extent, remember there are things we are trying to do in this legislative body, in the Senate, in Washington, to deal with this issue. One of the issues we are going to have a chance to deal with soon, I hope, is reauthorizing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which was sponsored last year by Senator BROWN and Senator LEAHY. Hopefully, we can finish that before the end of this year, but if we cannot, I hope early in the next Congress we will address it.

As you know, there are also reports that the State Department does rank countries around the world on the efforts they are making to deal with human trafficking, and they actually rank them in three tiers, the third being the worst, those nations not doing enough. I hope we look at how we reform the process of giving some of these countries waivers. There are countries that are perpetually on the list of the worst possible places with regard to government policy toward human trafficking. Yet they are getting waivers from the implications and the consequences of being a tier 3 country. There are countries getting that waiver every single year.